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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 1065 – Economic Development – Baltimore Symphony Orchestra –
Funding and Reporting**

March 12, 2020

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Just a year ago, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO) was in dire financial shape with a severe cash flow problem that raised doubt, even by outside auditors, that it was viable as an ongoing concern. Based on those issues, we passed House Bill 1404 that had two critical elements. The first was to provide immediate additional funding for the purpose of stabilizing the situation. The second was to require the formation of a Workgroup.

Over this past year, there have been several positive actions. The BSO and the musicians have entered into a labor agreement through September. The private sector has stepped up, pledging over 6 million additional dollars since December alone. And the outside auditor has recently given the BSO Board a clean audit opinion.

The Workgroup was formed and was charged with making very specific recommendations on how to create long term financial stability, develop new audiences and increase and diversify statewide participation. Under the Chairmanship of Senator Ed Kasemeyer, the workgroup produced a comprehensive report and set of recommendations that provide a road map to putting the BSO on a path of stability and future excellence.

One of the recommendations that is key to the long term stability of the BSO, is a financial commitment from the State of a limited nature. Senate Bill 1065 mandates that commitment. It is a specific appropriation of declining amounts ending in fiscal year 2026. This financial commitment when combined with the other recommendations in the workgroup's report, will put the BSO on a path for permanent viability, expansion and excellence.

I believe that we can commit the funds proposed in Senate Bill 1065 with great confidence that it will be a vital piece to a new paradigm for the BSO and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 1065.